

## Iron River Pike Chain of Lakes Annual Meeting August 12, 2023 at Iron River Community Center

The meeting was called to order by Jay Johnson, President.

**Treasurer's Report** by John Coffey. Just under \$200K cash available after paying bills for EWM this year and other expenses. Through 7/31/23 dues and donations were \$34K to date. This was about \$20 below expenditures for the year. Al noted that we will be getting up to about \$80K from the Wis DNR that we have not collected on. Jay noted that the grants have covered about 75% of the costs of our treatments over the years. For instance, full lake treatment of Eagle lake was about \$25K last year.

There was no new business to discuss.

Motion was made and passed to **keep annual dues at \$20** for 2023 to 2024.

The Nominating Committee nominated Jim Bender for another 3 year term. He has served 6 years so far. There were no other nominees from the floor. **Jim Bender was elected for another 3 year term until August 2026.**

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

#### **Audit Committee**

Members: Joe Rapacz and Mike Higgins

Joe Rapacz noted that there were no deficiencies and everything as in order.

#### **Fisheries Committee**

Members: Al Boehler, Jay Johnson, Derek Ogle and Bill Swenson.

Al Boehler noted that we continue to have a low walleye count at about 1 per 250 acres. In the past it's been 5 or more per acre. It is felt that the 1300% increase in the large bass population has contributed to low walleye numbers in addition to over fishing. After being a control lake with no fish stocking, the DNR stocked about 10,000 walleyes in Buskey Bay in 2021. There are plans to stock more walleyes this year by the Twin Bear Campground. The bass eat the young walleyes and only about 10% of the stocked walleyes survive. The DNR fish count data for this year is not available yet. We have a new DNR fish biologist, Nathan Thomas, working with the Iron River Pike Chain. Efforts are underway to change the fishing limits for the IR Pike Chain but that is about a 3 year process.

#### **Aquatic and Invasive Species (AIS) Committee**

Members: Al Boehler, Jay Johnson, Mike Higgins, Eddie Wangenstein

We have successfully been battling Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) for about twenty years now. While we can't get rid of it completely, we are controlling it with our efforts and the help of donors plus DNR grants.

Getting DNR grants is very competitive and based on a point system. We get extra points for doing a barrier treatment study. Even though this is more work for lake volunteers it's very worthwhile if it helps to get DNR grant support money.

The barrier goes down about 20 feet to get below the thermocline. The thermocline is below about 16 feet. An interesting fact is that the deeper waters below the thermocline are much colder and do not mix with the upper layer of the lake. The sun and warm summer air make the water above the thermocline warmer. Since the warmer upper layer does not mix with the lower level, we can use less chemicals by just treating the top warmer layer.

Jay Johnson presented pictures of this year's barrier project on the Northeast end of Millicent. Ryan Nelson let the group use their property to construct the barrier. There was about 400 feet of curtain that needed to be sewed together. Everyone signed the barrier before putting it into the water. It was tied to the Onan boathouse (later moved to the Nelson shoreline) then stretched across to the Wangenstein shoreline. The next day the chemical treatment was done. There was lots of sampling done inside and outside the barrier coordinated by Kristina Sorensen and Derek Johnson. There was an outstanding turnout of volunteers this year and everyone was amazing.

Using Procellacor there was a "whole lake treatment" for Buskey Bay as well as some spot treatments in Hart Lake. Procellacor is much more expensive than the 2,4 D but more effective and degrades faster.

Next week (later August 2023) we have Dive Assisted Suctioning and Harvesting unit from Minoqua will be taking out areas with limited EWM infestations.

Onterra will be surveying late September to assess how effective the treatments were and anecdotal reports so far are positive.

Karen Austin talked about the boat inspection program. This program is partially funded by the Clean Boats Clean Waters program through the DNR. Although we receive grant money to support paying people to do boat inspections, the size of our grant is also dependent on volunteer hours. We need 666 volunteer hours to get the \$20K grant and are coming up a bit short on meeting that goal. In addition to the IR Pike Chain, Long Lake is also benefitting from the grant.

Mike Higgins continues to serve on the Bayfield County AIS committee as our representative.

### **Fundraising and Membership**

Jay noted that we are in a very good position based on what's in the bank account, so we have not done any aggressive fund raising. DNR grants for most of the years that have paid roughly 75% of the cost of treating EWM have also been very helpful. Over years,

these grants have amounted to approximately \$500K. The chain is a nonprofit 501c3 organization and contributions are tax deductible. Please let your company know if they do matching gifts. Membership in the IRPCLA includes less than 50% of the households on the chain. If we didn't treat the EWM, property values would plummet as the lake filled up with EWM. So, we need to encourage everyone to contribute they can and be members. We have a number of members that don't own a place but want to support our cause.

Al Bochler noted that Sportsman's Connection helped us with handouts in the past to promote our organization and now have made up a wood engraved map of the Pike Chain. Cost is online (est \$180 – depending on the size) and for each map ordered, 20% of the sales will go to the association. Takes 7 to 21 days to get it.

### **Nominating Committee**

Here is a summary the current Board of Directors and their terms. Note that in 2024 we will have a number of people going off the BOD after serving 9 years. So, please consider volunteering for the BOD next summer.

Jay Johnson, President (3<sup>rd</sup> term ends 2024)  
Joe Rapacz, Vice President (3<sup>rd</sup> term ends 2024)  
John Coffey, Treasurer (3<sup>rd</sup> term ends 2025)  
Tom Sandager, Secretary (2<sup>nd</sup> term ends 2025)  
Al Bochler, Past President  
Barb Beeksma (1<sup>st</sup> term ends 2024)  
Jim Bender ( 2<sup>nd</sup> term ends 2023) and Jim is willing to serve another 3 years.  
Jake Gress (1<sup>st</sup> term ends 2024)  
Mike Higgins (2<sup>nd</sup> term ends 2024)  
Paula Doty Millar (2<sup>nd</sup> term ends 2025)  
Kristina Sorensen (1<sup>st</sup> term ends 2024)  
Amy Arneson Wangensteen (2<sup>nd</sup> term ends 2025)

### **Website Update**

Jay Johnson and the BOD thank John Joseph for his many years of service (over 20 years) keeping up the IRPCLA website.

Derek and Emily Johnson have volunteered to take this over and a new website will go live by early September. Check it out at [Iron River Pike Chain of Lakes Association \(www.pikechain.org\)](http://www.pikechain.org). Thank you Derek and Emily.

### **Additional Items of Interest**

Loon nests discussed by Jay Johnson. This year the water level was a bit higher and people were worried that the loon nests on the shorelines were going to not work right. Loons typically nest initially on the smaller lakes then move over to larger lakes like IR Pike Chain. The Northland College Sigard Olson Environmental Institute out of

Ashland has been experimenting with creating artificial floating loon nests that will adapt to rising water levels when heavy rains occur. They are looking for volunteers to monitor loon activity on the IR Pike Chain.

A representative from the Iron River Fire Department talked about the difficulties they face trying to get out to people having on the water emergencies on the IR Pike Chain. This program was inspired an accident involving Max Weyandt from the IR Pike Chain August 2022 in which he drowned. fThey are implementing a program where lake owners can provide their contact information to help the emergency personnel reach victims in an emergency by using pontoons or boats of the lake property owner. Please check with the Iron River Fire Department for more information.

Jerry and Julie Peck after many years of organizing the biannual highway cleanup are requesting volunteers to take over this task. Please contact them if you are interested.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Sandager, Secretary IRPCLA